This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.

+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.

+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.

+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`

Z
720
B6
N4
1913
SAL

THE NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY
ASTOR LENOX AND TILDEN FOUNDATIONS

STAN
LIBRA

MEMORIAL MEETING

IN HONOR OF THE LATE

DR. JOHN SHAW BILLINGS.

APRIL 25, 1913

NEW YORK
1913

WITHDRAWN FROM LIBRARY

B
B514

THE NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY
ASTOR LENOX AND TILDEN FOUNDATIONS

MEMORIAL MEETING

IN HONOR OF THE LATE

DR. JOHN SHAW BILLINGS,

APRIL 25, 1913

STANFORD LIBRARY

NEW YORK
1913

196960

STANFORD LIBRARY

DOCTOR JOHN SHAW BILLINGS
DIRECTOR OF THE NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY
1896-1913

He was twenty-four years old when he entered the army. His first duty, while waiting for his commission, was to serve under the president of the examining board at the Union Hospital, Georgetown. At once his extraordinary manual skill and boldness in dealing with difficult cases attracted the attention of the surgeon-general, who put him in charge of the Cliffborne Hospital near Georgetown. This hospital, once a barrack, as I understand it, he altered and rebuilt, and there dealt with many of the wounded from the seven days' fight about Richmond, having numberless Union and Confederate soldiers under his care. Here as elsewhere he did nearly all of the operative work. Then followed a series of distinguished appointments. The first took him to the West Philadelphia Satterlee Hospital, where were some thousands of beds filled with sick or wounded soldiers. In March, 1863, he reported for duty to the Army of the Potomac. In anticipation of the fight at Chancellorsville, he located the hospital of the second division of the Fifth Corps. It was, however, so near the firing line that it was shattered by a shell, and he fell back several hundred yards. Here for hours the wounded were treated, Billings performing many of what we call major operations, until he was obliged to remove his wounded to the Chancellorsville House. This position also coming under artillery fire was evacuated, and one of his assistants, Dr. Hichborne, was killed. Another hospital was improvised six hundred yards back. During these changes, besides the time given to operations and the dressing of wounds, Dr. Billings had the terrible problem of moving again and again the wounded of a retreating army, and how he dealt with those dangerous situations in a wonderfully efficient manner he tells very modestly in one of his numberless contributions to the "Medical History of the War of the Rebellion."

At Gettysburg, being attached to the Seventh Infantry, he established his hospital in a stone house and barn back of Round Top. As he rode up to take possession, he was for a time under heavy fire from the enemy. During one entire day and all night he and the other medical officers were afoot doing operations and caring for seven hundred and fifty wounded men. On the following morning this hospital was evacuated under fire. Concerning the few days which followed the victory we have his own account of his resourceful way of organizing hospital service, foraging for his patients, dressing wounds, and in between times doing the gravest operations, until even with his amazing capital of energy he was utterly exhausted. His account of this service as told in the medical annals of the war would be worth republication. The terrible nature of the work here and elsewhere so affected his health, that he had to ask for thirty days' sick leave. Thenceforward his ser-

vice was chiefly in hospitals at various places. He was also called upon to collate statistics and data relative to the medical service of the Army of the Potomac for the great medical history of the war.

In December 1864, Dr. Billings was ordered to the Surgeon-General's Office. War service in the field was now over for him, and with a record of efficiency, resourcefulness and competence of head and hand, in the field and in hospitals, he was in a position to have entered into practice as a great surgeon in any one of our large cities and to have won distinction and fortune. He seems, however, to have been attached to the army, and to have been so immediately understood that in the office of the Surgeon-General he had charge of matters pertaining to all contract physicians, the organization of the Veteran Reserve Corps, the enormous accounts of hospitals which were disbursing thousands of dollars, and other minor duties. He had, too, the care of the pathological museum created by Surgeon-General Hammond and by Dr. Billings' friend Surgeon John H. Brinton. The want of books for consultation was felt at once by this eager scholar. Fortunately, at the close of the war in 1865, the hospitals turned in to the Surgeon-General's Office something like eighty-five thousand dollars of their savings, and this he was allowed to use for the library, which then began to grow under his fostering care, until it attained unlooked for dimensions and made necessary the time-saving catalogue, of which others will speak, but which led him long afterwards to be called to the distinguished position which has left in these halls memories of efficiency and varied usefulness, and I trust will be remembered among you as an example for those who follow him.

What is most striking in this career is simply its unfailing industry and singular variety of competence. Of this I could not speak fitly without mention of the various lines of work which followed his success in Washington. Suffice it to say that this man was not only a person of very great intellect, with a mind having the natural history quality of capacity for classification, but also the power to combine when in command here and elsewhere the strictest discipline with the utmost kindness. I rise from the contemplation of this much loved man with a feeling that what made him so capable was not only originative genius, with talent for the most industrious application of his many mental resources, but above all that group of qualities which we sum up in the word *character* and which stands out clearly in many great lives as a generous encouragement to men who feel they are not so productively great as others.

I may be pardoned a personal word. My love and admiration for this man began early in the war, when my brother, a young surgeon, fell ill, and finally died. He was cared for with the utmost tenderness

by the man whose death we now regret. This was the beginning of a friendship which lasted without the slightest disturbance and with much mutual benefit up to the time of his death. I find pleasant to recall a few words he said to me not many weeks before he died. I had been asking him how many degrees he had received, and when we began to count the LL.D.s and the D.C.L.s, he laughed and said, with his note of humor, "Yes, that is my principal title to be considered a man of letters." Then he paused a little and added, "There is one thing I value far more than these, because as life went on the honors which fell to my share seemed to me unimportant compared to the friendships which I have been so happy as to gather on the way." I gladly recall, but cannot venture to repeat, his words of kindly remembrance, and how he ended by saying how warm was his affection for some of the men whose presence here to-day forbids me to mention their names.

It has been hard for me to say these few words while omitting a great deal that was personal and interesting. It is proper and fitting, however, as I close, to say how much thought John Billings gave to you of the library staff who aided him in his triumphal management of his final task, and how deeply he resented any failure to recognize the loyal support which you gave him.

Mr. Cadwalader: I have the pleasure to present to you Sir William Osler, Regius Professor of Medicine in Oxford University, a friend of Dr. Billings, and a friend of all good learning.

ADDRESS BY SIR WILLIAM OSLER

I speak of Dr. Billings with the reverence inspired by a friendship of nearly thirty years, and I bring officially the appreciative recognition of his great work of the Bibliographical Society of Great Britain of which he was a much esteemed honorary member and of which I happen to be President.

Of only one aspect of Dr. Billings' work I can speak with full knowledge. As a medical bibliographer he occupies a unique position. There have been great students of medical literature since Conrad Gesner, the Swiss Pliny, wrote his famous Bibliotheca Universalis — Haller, Ploucquet, Haeser, Young, Eloy, Boyle, Forbes, and Watt — but their labors are Lilliputian in comparison with the Gargantuan undertaking which occupied the spare moments in some thirty years of Dr. Billings' life. It is interesting that the conception of a great bibliography should have come to him while a young man. In a paper on early reminiscences he speaks of an aspiration "to establish for the use of American physicians a fairly complete medical library, and in connection with this to prepare

a comprehensive catalogue and index which should spare medical teachers and writers the drudgery of consulting ten thousand or more different indexes or turning over the leaves of as many volumes to find a dozen or so references of which they might be in search."

The opportunity came in 1864 when he was assigned to duty in the Surgeon General's Office. There had been a few volumes connected with the Office since the days of Surgeon General Lovell in 1836, and during the war additions were made by Surgeon General Hammond and by Doctors Otis and Woodward — names memorable in the history of American medicine; but supported ably in his efforts by successive Surgeons General and liberal grants from Congress Dr. Billings was able in a few years to collect one of the largest and most complete medical libraries in the world. In 1895 when he retired there were 308,445 volumes and pamphlets and 4,335 portraits; and at the present time the library is the largest of its kind in the world, containing upwards of half a million volumes and more than 5,000 portraits.

A single volume catalogue was issued in 1872, a three volume one in 1873-74, and in 1876 his big plan took shape in a 'specimen fasciculus' of a new catalogue. After four years of hard work in which he was greatly helped by Dr. Robert Fletcher volume I of the "Index Catalogue" was issued and thereafter year by year volumes appeared with extraordinary regularity, and in 1895 series I was completed — fifteen great volumes each of nearly 1,000 pages. No undertaking in bibliography of the same magnitude dealing with a special subject had ever been issued, and its extraordinary value was at once appreciated all over the world. The second series followed the first and is now rapidly approaching completion.

While the Catalogue only represents the contents of the Surgeon General's Library it really is an exhaustive index of medical literature. So general were Dr. Billings' interests that all departments of medicine are represented, and there is not a subject, as there is scarcely an author of note ancient or modern not in the catalogue.

For example, a few years ago Dr. Aldis Wright of Cambridge asked me if I could help him in certain references to obscure medical writers referred to in Burton's Anatomy of Melancholy, of which he could find no trace in British libraries, the references in which he was tracking to their sources. I took the list to Dr. Fletcher. Every one was in the Library.

The catalogue has in high degree the two essentials of a good bibliography — comprehensiveness and accuracy. Taking the two series for reference purposes there has never been issued a work so generally useful to the profession. Take any subject you wish from Dreams

to Dizziness from Coprolalia to Suicide the literature is given in a full and systematic manner. If you desire to look up the biography of any man in medicine or in science from Hippocrates to Koch, the dates are there and the necessary information. The marvellous accuracy has always been a wonder to me. In the many thousands of references I have made to the volumes I do not think I have noted more than one or two mistakes. A curious one, by the way, was that which has sent our beloved Nestor, Dr. Weir Mitchell, down the ages with a wrong prenomen.

In 1879 a monthly supplement to the "Index Catalogue" was begun as the "Index Medicus," a publication of the greatest value to students, which is now continued by the Carnegie Institution of Washington. There is no better float through posterity than to be the author of a good bibliography. Scores know Conrad Gesner by the "Bibliotheca" who never saw the "Historia Animalium." A hundred consult Haller's bibliographies for one that looks at his other works, and years after the iniquity of oblivion has covered Dr. Billings' work in the army, as an organizer in connection with hospitals, and even his relation to the great Library, the great Index will remain an enduring monument to his fame.

Mr. Cadwalader: I have the honor to present to you Dr. William H. Welch, of the Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, long a co-worker and friend of Dr. Billings.

ADDRESS BY DR. WILLIAM H. WELCH

The extraordinary extent and variety of Dr. Billings' activities make it impossible on this occasion even to enumerate, still more so adequately to characterize his important services.

From Dr. Mitchell's interesting sketch, which you have just heard, of Dr. Billings' remarkable services in the Civil war — a phase of his career so overshadowed by later achievements as to have been in danger of oblivion, had it not thus been rescued for us — it is evident that even as a young army surgeon, Dr. Billings had begun to manifest those qualities of skillfulness, efficiency and resourcefulness exemplified so strikingly in his more familiar, later work.

Dr. Osler has spoken of the central and greatest achievements of Dr. Billings' life, which will perpetuate his fame for all time — the building up and development of the great library of the Surgeon-General's Office in Washington and his monumental contributions to medical bibliography. This work, to which he devoted thirty years of almost unparalleled energy and labor, constitutes probably the most original and distinctive contribution of America to the medicine of the world.

It is remarkable and hardly to be expected that work of this highly specialized, bibliographical character should have been produced in a new country and by an army surgeon.

Speakers who are to follow will pay tribute to Dr. Billings as Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Carnegie Institution of Washington, and especially as the librarian of The New York Public Library, in which capacity since 1896 he has done on a larger scale a great, constructive work rivalling in importance that previously accomplished in Washington.

It remains for me to call your attention briefly to certain other aspects of Dr. Billings' career, which, although in a sense incidental to the main work of his life, are nevertheless important. One of these is his work in connection with the construction and organization of hospitals — a field in which he became our leading authority and acquired international reputation.

Dr. Billings' interest in hospital construction can be traced to his experiences as a surgeon in our Civil war, in the course of which there was developed a new style of building hospitals, consisting in a central administrative building with barrack-like pavilions, either detached or connected by corridors. In the promulgation, if not in the origination, of this method of hospital construction, known in Europe as "the American system," Dr. Billings had the largest share through his valuable report on "Barracks and Hospitals," published in 1870 and through his work in planning and describing hospitals, especially the Johns Hopkins Hospital.

Dr. Billings was one of the five eminent physicians selected by the Trustees to prepare essays regarding the best plans to be adopted in the construction and organization of the hospital for which Johns Hopkins had provided the largest gift of money which had been made up to that time for such a purpose. His essay was chosen as the best, and from 1876 to the opening of the hospital in 1889 he acted as the highly efficient medical adviser of the trustees of the Johns Hopkins Hospital, whose confidence he enjoyed in the highest degree.

The building of the Johns Hopkins Hospital, with its admirable arrangements for heating, ventilation, isolation, sanitary cleanliness and nursing, and especially those "for joining hands with the University," as Dr. Billings expressed it, in the work of medical education and discovery, marked a new era in hospital construction, for which Dr. Billings deserves the chief credit. When one considers the influence of this hospital upon the construction of other hospitals and the valuable contributions made by Dr. Billings to the solution of various hospital problems, when one also regards the uses which have been made of this hospital in the care and treatment of the sick, in the training of students and

physicians and the promotion of knowledge, it is evident that Dr. Billings' services in the field we are now considering were of large and enduring significance. I esteem it a privilege on this occasion in behalf of my colleagues and of the trustees of the Johns Hopkins Hospital and University to express our sense of indebtedness and gratitude to Dr. Billings for his pioneer work in preparing the soil without which the seed could not have been planted and ripened.

For many years there was scarcely an important hospital in this country to be constructed or remodelled concerning which Dr. Billings' advice and often active assistance were not sought. His work in this connection, added to his experiences as an army surgeon, early drew his attention to the science and art of sanitation, in which he became a writer and authority of eminence, being in certain directions our leading sanitarian during the quarter of a century from 1870 onward.

His publications in this field related naturally at first to military hygiene, and later were concerned with "Principles of Ventilation and Heating," municipal hygiene, mortality and vital statistics and other sanitary subjects. Dr. Billings was vice-president of the short-lived National Board of Health, established by the Government in 1879. The withdrawal by Congress of support of this highly promising service of the government set back, we may believe, for many years the advancement of the public health interests of this country.

Of fundamental importance to public sanitation was Dr. Billings' work in the collection and analysis of the vital and social statistics of the tenth and eleventh censuses in 1880 and 1890 — a contribution which made him our foremost vital statistician.

When Dr. Billings upon his own application retired after over thirty years service from the Army it was to assume the professorship of hygiene and directorship of the new laboratory of hygiene in the University of Pennsylvania. Although he was so soon withdrawn from this position to The New York Public Library that this period is hardly more than an episode in his career, yet he remained long enough to demonstrate that his conception of the organization of the new department was along broad lines and gave promise of successful results.

Dr. Billings was not only the greatest of medical bibliographers, he was also a noteworthy contributor to medical history and lexicography. He delivered a course of Lowell lectures on the history of medicine and he was for several years lecturer on the history of medicine in the Johns Hopkins University, where before the opening of the hospital, he had been lecturer on hygiene. His elaborate article on the history of surgery in the "System of Surgery," edited by himself and Dr. Dennis, is probably the most valuable contribution to the subject in the English language.

A final word as to Dr. Billings' influence upon the medical profession. He was a leader of the profession. His name and that of his intimate friend of many years, Dr. Weir Mitchell, whom we still delight to honor as the chief ornament of American medicine, were of all the physicians of this country the two best known in Europe. Dr. Billings was the one most frequently sought for and chosen to represent this country in international medical congresses and public occasions of importance. His leadership was based upon intellectual power and above all upon strength and integrity of character. He was a singularly wise man, combining with far-sighted vision critical judgment, the gift of persuasion, and practical good sense. To an incredible capacity for work he joined a high sense of duty and a just appreciation and sympathy which secured the loyal devotion of his co-workers. His perspective was true, removed as far as possible from all narrowness of view.

In certain of his general addresses, notably those at the Centennial Exhibition in Philadelphia in 1876, at the International Medical Congress in London in 1881 and before the British Medical Association in 1886, Dr. Billings' estimates and criticisms of the achievements of American medicine, while entirely fair and by no means lacking in appreciation, were so frankly free from any spirit of provincialism or chauvinism, that they gave offence in certain quarters of this country, but he said what at the time needed to be said, and the influence was salutary.

The name of Dr. Billings will always hold a place of honor in our profession. As I see in this audience many of my colleagues of the medical profession, I know that they will desire me to express in their behalf and in behalf of the entire medical profession of this country, the large indebtedness which we owe to the life and work of this man of large achievement, of high character, of enduring, beneficial influence upon this country.

Mr. Cadwalader: I have the pleasure to present to you a gentleman who needs no eulogy. I present to you Mr. Andrew Carnegie.

ADDRESS BY MR. ANDREW CARNEGIE

Life and death, the twin mysteries of all forms, from the blade of grass to the human brain are ever crowding upon us; ever remaining unsolved. We can only bow in silence to the inevitable. Better so; better so.

When one of our circle, possessed of unusual gifts and master of great agencies of progress, passes away and is lost apparently forever, we murmur "Why, oh why?" — no answer comes. We gather today

upon such an occasion and bowing our heads and hearts we murmur acquiescence to the stern decree of laws beyond our ken, which it were folly to question. We bow to the inevitable and taking up again the duties of life which lie before us we labor in the path of duty awaiting our summons hence. May we follow the example of the friend whose loss we mourn today. His was a long and arduous task resolutely performed from beginning to end for man's elevation and advancement.

Beginning in 1857 by graduating in Miami University, then receiving his degree in medicine in 1860, he entered the army and rose from station to station as medical officer until called to Washington in 1864. He was placed in charge of various important works, each performed in succession with such masterly skill as to lead to other appointments until Dr. Billings stood foremost in his wide domain, his crowning service being rendered to this magnificent and unequaled library in which we now stand and which must ever be associated with his genius; than genius we can use no word less awe-inspiring.

Directorship in this library, his crowning work, brought me into close contact with him whose loss we mourn and so deeply did his talents and ability impress us we ventured to ask his advice upon founding the institution of research at Washington which has been referred to here, and here we found him also master as if he had studied the problem for years. To him we were indebted for its successful start with Professor Gilman in command. Upon his resignation a successor, the present head, was found and recommended by Doctor Billings, then Chairman of the Board of Trustees, and Professor Woodward has fully fulfilled our most sanguine expectations. Knowledge is said to consist of two elements — What you yourself already know, and what you know how and where to obtain—of both departments our dear lost friend was master. Apart from his wonderful powers of the brain, his heart was tender, and many a tired o'er-labored employe feels today he has lost a loving, tender friend. He was always just, always considerate. A man of both head and heart.

Friends, during his long, useful, pure and unwearied life he set all privileged to know him an example we shall do well to treasure and follow; for of him it can be truly said, he lived a kindly pure life above reproach, and by faithful administration of great tasks committed to him, surrounded by troops of friends, he left the world a little better than he found it. If the highest worship of God be service to man, there he stands; his service to man has been testified to by the leading authorities in different positions today. When shall we look upon his like again? We his sorrowing friends assembled here today to honor his memory have never known one of whom it can more safely be predicted:

"If there's another world he lives in bliss,
If there be none he made the best of this."

Mr. Cadwalader: I feel that among the letters I have received I must read a single letter, one from Mr. Root long a co-worker and intimate friend of Dr. Billings.

LETTER FROM SENATOR ELIHU ROOT

United States Senate,
Washington.

April 23, 1913.

Dear Mr. Cadwalader:

I regret very much that imperative duties in Washington will prevent my attending the meeting in honor of Doctor Billings. I wish I could be present to express in some degree the high honor in which I hold him. During many years of acquaintance and observation of his work, and especially through eleven years of association in the Executive Committee of the Carnegie Research Institution of Washington, I came to have great admiration for his qualities and a warm personal regard for him. The breadth and variety of his learning, the definite certainty of his knowledge, the catholicity of his interest in all matters coming within the field of science, made his opinion of the greatest value. His service was devoted and untiring. He had intellectual as well as moral integrity, and a rugged independence of character which commanded recognition and respect. He came as near as any man I ever knew to absolute independence of judgment, and he was so simple and natural and unhesitating in his expression that his positive differences of opinion created no irritation. No project or expenditure could pass his scrutiny by easy or indolent acquiescence but only as it approved itself to his experience and reason. Yet he was essentially constructive and progressive in his views and wishes, and he was simple, modest, unassuming, without pride of opinion or personal bias. He never advertised himself or vaunted himself, and only a few who had the good fortune to know him well could appreciate what a great, strong, devoted and useful citizen he was.

Fewer still remember that fifty years ago he was serving in the field in the Civil War as a medical officer in the Union Army; that he was breveted Captain, Major, and Lieutenant-Colonel for faithful and meritorious service during the war; that he began the career of a great librarian by being Medical Inspector in charge of the library of the Surgeon General's office, and was virtually the creator of the Army Medical Library in Washington and the founder of the system of medical education in the American Army. It was this system of education which led to such high credit for our country and such blessings to mankind through

the work of the Medical Corps in Cuba in extirpating yellow fever and through the sanitation of the Isthmus, making the building of the Panama Canal possible. He has filled no great space in the newspapers nor probably will in history, and I think he would not care about that. But I am sure that the high estimate set upon his character and service and the affectionate remembrance in which he is held by those who knew him, who knew what he was and what he did, would be most grateful to him.

Faithfully yours,

Elihu Root.

John L. Cadwalader, Esq.,
New York.

Mr. Cadwalader: I have the pleasure of presenting to you Mr. Richard R. Bowker, editor of the "Library Journal."

ADDRESS BY MR. RICHARD R. BOWKER

We come not to bury a great man, but to praise him, to declare that his spirit cannot be buried in the grave. I bring to the memory of John Shaw Billings, though sadly yet with rejoicing, on behalf of the American Library Association of which he was a past president, of the New York State Library Association, of the New York Library Club, of which also he had been president, the homage of the library profession and as a trustee of the sister library system in Brooklyn, the tribute of all who are interested in library work. Sadly I say, because his great personality is shrouded from our mortal sight beyond the mists and mystery of death, yet with rejoicing because from the years that are told there will be abiding and eternal influence through the years that are to come. Dr. Billings was a great librarian because he was a great man. He was a member of the executive profession, whose members — it may be a great banker, a great merchant, a great manufacturer, a great lawyer, a great bishop, a great president, a great librarian, — are always leaders, commanders of men and of affairs. He did many things well; he could have done almost anything well. He had an instinct for books, the keen eye and the sure touch for the value of them; and this brought him into that part of his life work of which I have to speak.

Years ago, Oliver Wendell Holmes, describing a visit of Dr. Billings to his private library in Cambridge, told how he came into the room, looked around, darted at a book, which was the most valuable volume on the shelves, examined it, replaced it, took another survey and made tracks for a second book, which was the second most valuable book in

the collection; and Dr. Holmes twinkled, "Why, sir, Dr. Billings is a bibliophile of such eminence that I regard him as a positive danger to the owner of a library, if he is ever let loose in it alone." But Dr. Billings' probity would stand even that test.

With this instinct for books, when toward the close of the war, at 27, he came to the Surgeon-General's Office, he had the vision of the growth of the few hundred books of that day into the great medical library which is now one of his monuments, the greatest in the world, with its round half-million books and pamphlets. From this came the great subject catalogue which is his triumph in bibliography and from this in turn came, in association with that other bibliographical enthusiast, Frederick Leypoldt, the Index Medicus, so that at one time he had going on three enterprises which would each in itself tax the strength of any one strong man. Our library friend MacAlister of London tells of how after the close of a long and arduous official day he once found Dr. Billings "resting," on his couch, with a monument of medical periodicals on the right which was slowly diminishing while he carefully marked the indexing of the periodical of the moment in whatever language it might be, and made it part of the increasing monument on the left. This was an example of his untiring "rest." It was the same library friend to whom he said once, when MacAlister was wondering at the extent of his work, "I will let you into the secret. There is nothing really difficult if you only begin. Some people contemplate a task until it looms so big it seems impossible. But I just begin, and it gets done somehow. There would be no coral islands if the first bug sat down and began to wonder how the job was to be done." This is pleasant illustration both of the doctor's method and of the genial humor of which many knew little.

After his thirty years' work in the Surgeon General's Office and his retirement from the army, he took up, as you have heard, what he thought was the final work of his life, in connection with the professorship of hygiene in the University of Pennsylvania. But a new and final chapter, perhaps the greatest chapter in his life, was to open. For in 1895 he was called to the directorship of The New York Public Library, on the Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations. It is the business of a board of trustees, whether library or other, to find the right executive for their work and then to support him. That the trustees of this library did in finding Dr. Billings, and we have here the monument of the seventeen years of growth which have come so largely from their wise decision. "Si monumentum videre circumspice."

He came to this work at the age of fifty-eight, when most men begin to think of resting from their labors. He found the Astor Library, and the Lenox Library as well, in archaic condition, with books shelved in

fixed location, with incomplete and incongruous catalogues, a staff of only forty persons, and short hours and short shrift for the public. Not satisfied with either of the standard classifications for a large library, he worked out an individual system of classification and arrangement, brought together, standardized, completed, and unified catalogues for both libraries, and made corresponding development everywhere.

The first thought of the trustees was for an adequate central building, and in 1897 Dr. Billings roughed out a post card plan for this library, which will remain among its most treasured possessions, embodying as it does, the essential features of this great building, with its remarkable co-ordination in location of the many special libraries which it comprises.

He saw the need of a wide branch system and planned the consolidation into the system of the eleven branches of the free circulating library; and now, thanks to the splendid donation of $5,200,000 for which the city has to thank Mr. Carnegie's confidence in Dr. Billings as his library advisor, there are now forty branches, bringing together into a centralized system nearly all of the lesser libraries previously existent. At last, two years ago, his work was crowned by the completion of this magnificent building, and the remarkable removal to it of the million volumes now housed here, with a staff of nearly a thousand people here and throughout the branches, serving the public during every working hour of the day, and with such facilities of public service as almost to realize the dream of the ideal library.

Throughout all this his was the master mind. He worked with such ease that it scarcely seemed work to others and only his associates, and those who were nearest to him, knew fully the largeness, the foresight, the kindness, and the sympathy of this great librarian.

It will perhaps especially surprise you to know how intimately he related himself with the children's work, being the wisest and most sympathetic counselor which the department had. In fact, all through his life he made it his business to know about children's books for the sake of the smaller people of his household, reading even the Elsie books with them in mind. He was so interested in the "story telling hour," that when the National Academy of Sciences met in this city, he begged the head of the children's department to arrange a story-telling hour for their benefit, and so "Old Mr. Kangaroo," "Why the sea is salt" and other examples of evolutionary folk-lore delighted the wiseacres who came to New York.

All through his library work he showed the most exact and comprehensive knowledge of affairs, large and in detail, and he went beyond this library to co-ordinate other libraries here and everywhere. I recall that when the libraries of the United Engineering Societies were ready

to be unified in the Carnegie building, the engineers somehow had the impression that the public library authorities were rather offish. I arranged to bring the chairman of the engineers' committee to a conference with Dr. Billings and almost the first thing that the doctor said was, "Well, tell us what you want to do and we will do the other things," out of that came the harmonious co-operation which makes the great engineering library across the street virtually a part of this great library and both of mutual benefit to all American engineers. He was consulted about the choice of a librarian for that library, and when Mr. Cutter's name was mentioned, it was most interesting to note how much he knew of the details of Mr. Cutter's life and work, and how thoroughly he approved of the suggestion.

Throughout the seventeen years he kept everyone in mind. Sometimes he did the work of an official or of a department to know what details that official or department was doing and when there was to be a promotion he would in passing through the library, stop at a desk and say "Your work has been well done, and there will be a little change in your salary and you will have this or that position," and he left his hearer with the genial glow in his heart. Not many knew how many of these human qualities the dear doctor had, nor can those of us who knew him well communicate this knowledge to others. He was human and nothing that was dear to man was foreign to him.

We shall not look upon his like again — because there is always the new man for the new work, but the new man in the library field must always be inspired by the example of the splendid work which Dr. Billings has left to the profession. Happily he was honored in his life: universities and medical societies all over the world from Miami to Buda-Pesth honored him. He had perhaps more degrees than almost any other man, except possibly Ambassador Bryce and the Rector of Saint Andrews, who enjoys the unique and supreme degree of the Carnegie Self-Education Institute, the parent of all the Carnegie Institutions.

Dr. Billings was first and foremost the soldier, if by a true soldier, we mean fortitude, valor, courage, persistence and all those qualities which go to make the highest man. But he was a soldier for the common good, a soldier of peace, rather than of war. He fought three great campaigns, one for the public health, one for public enlightenment, one that closer personal fight with disease and threatening Death that tested his fortitude to the utmost. He suffered in hospital more wounds than most soldiers in the fiercest war. Twice he underwent operations for cancer, concealing even from his wife the seriousness of his malady by saying that he was taking a hospital vacation. In the latter years of his life, he was probably seldom without pain, and sleep was to great extent

denied him; yet all this never seemed to interfere with his work, and he still read a novel or two after the day's work as "the best of soporifics."

He had planned to retire this very month, but after all, he died, as he desired, in the harness, working up to the last week. He went to his death unflinchingly for though he still maintained with his associates his fearless equipoise, he confessed to a friend his inward fears of the gravity of the last operation. Part of his discipline he got in the army, but after all the discipline of his life was not in the army but in the ordeals of peace. And when we hear that war is necessary as the only school for those great qualities, let us have the faith to believe that soldiers like Billings, those of peace rather than of war, are the men who are to stand in the making of the future as these great libraries become the arsenals of progress and the library systems of which this is the most splendid example, become the great schools for the future of men.

CLOSING REMARKS BY MR. CADWALADER

We have heard from various co-workers and friends of Dr. Billings as to the various fields of activity in which our friend was engaged.

Perhaps, in closing these proceedings, you may permit me to say a single word as to the relation of Dr. Billings toward ourselves; I refer to The New York Public Library.

I first made Dr. Billings' acquaintance in 1895, when the various arrangements were in progress for the consolidation of the three libraries which ultimately became The New York Public Library. At that time Dr. Billings was occupying the position to which reference has been made, and was gently reposing, holding a single office only, a professor of hygiene in the University of Pennsylvania, a distinguished office, but at the same time no single place was at all sufficient for the energy of Dr. Billings. The general scheme of consolidation had been worked out. The various and complicated legal and other steps were in progress, and the construction of the building was contemplated upon this present site. We possessed large resources, unlimited law and architecture, private interest, sympathy, and public support, and competent workers in the Board of Trustees and otherwise to make the scheme successful.

What we required was a man, a man of unusual breadth of mind, of character and capacity, around whom, as a leading figure, all interests could gather, and whose unselfish power and skill could fuse these invaluable elements, for the public good.

As happens in American life, that man was found. He had retired from the army, and was reposing in a professorship which he held in the University of Pennsylvania.

"The idle spear and shield were hung up high."

Dr. Billings saw at once the possibilities of the position, and his whole intelligence leaped into activity the moment the University of Pennsylvania, with great liberality, released him from its service.

This stalwart, grave and somewhat distant man — stalwart in mind as he was in body — found at last the opportunity of concentrating his energy, learning and experience upon his final and perhaps his most attractive task in life.

How well he performed that office we well know. To attempt here to enumerate the successive steps is quite impossible. It is enough to say that he prepared the competition for the exterior, and with his own hands the plans of the interior arrangement of this building as it now exists. He organized the system by which the reference library was enlarged, catalogued and classified. He surrounded himself with a devoted staff, and he himself became the active living head. We caught the infection of his energy, and he would have been a poor soul who made no effort to trot on in the rear as he strode forward with gigantic steps.

With clear foresight, he saw that reference work alone would not sufficiently attract or satisfy the public eye and purse, and that a circulation system must be added to reach all classes.

On making his plan public, every agency, including every faith and sect engaged in the circulation of books with the aid of public funds, stepped aside and permitted this library to assume its burden and its duties.

By the generosity of Mr. Carnegie, made effective by the liberality and constant support of the City of New York, the broadest, most comprehensive and most effective library system in the world, quietly and almost unheralded, assumed its place and entered on its usefulness. But power and learning alone would never have achieved full success. Dr. Billings, however, possessed the capacity of binding his co-workers to him, trustees and staff; of satisfying all, not only that he was unhesitatingly and without qualification to be trusted, but that he possessed a capacity for friendship and affection, and that all who desired could find in him a sympathetic friend.

As for myself, I buried in his grave at Arlington one of a rapidly narrowing circle of my dearest friends.

He had no enemies; he could have none in the atmosphere in which he moved. He had no enmities, although he did not "suffer fools gladly," and regarded with amused contempt humbugs and pretenders who posed before the public.

In fact, I fear the learned Doctor at times, and perhaps often, regarded boards of trustees, committees, architects and such like as obstacles cunningly interposed to retard his progress on the path of life.

It is a happiness to us to know that after a life of almost romantic achievements he was allowed to witness the completion of his final task in the establishment and successful administration of this system.

With all his varied powers and capacities we certainly shall not look upon his like again.

Within these walls and in this assemblage, surely it is true that "He is not dead who giveth life to knowledge."

What lesson may we learn from simple life and patient death, from courage and capacity, from devotion to one's fellow man?

A great teacher has taught us what our duty is:

> "* * * Yet I argue not
> Against Heav'n's Hand or Will, nor 'bate a jot
> Of Heart or Hope; but still bear up and steer
> Right Onward * * *"

Ladies and gentlemen, these proceedings have now come to a close. It remains solely to thank these distinguished gentlemen who have done us the honor to testify to the life and services of Dr. Billings, and to thank you all for your attendance.

APPENDIX

Many letters of regret and appreciation were received from friends of Doctor Billings who were invited to be present at the meeting but were unable to accept. These letters were too numerous to be read at the meeting or to be printed here. The selections printed below give, however, an indication of their tenor and spirit:

FROM HIS EMINENCE, JOHN CARDINAL FARLEY ARCHBISHOP OF NEW YORK

I am glad to avail myself of this opportunity to tell you how pleased I am that this mark of respect is to be given to the memory of one whom I have known long and in a measure intimately.

My respect and regard for Dr. Billings grew as the years went on, and the news of his death came to me as that of a dear friend. Our acquaintance began before I became associated with the Public Library and even then I learned to admire his gentle and courtly character, not less than his love and remarkable knowledge of books and their makers. Everything I saw in Dr. Billings since I became a member of the Board of Trustees went to increase my first impressions of him.

FROM SIR HENRY BURDETT, K.C.B., K.C.V.O.

It is a matter of deep regret to myself that it is impossible for me to be present at the Memorial Meeting for the late Dr. John Shaw Billings on the 25th instant. I have only received the notice by this (Saturday) morning's post.

Few men in our generation have done better or more useful service to science, to medicine, to the sick and to all who are associated with illness, or to the uplifting and betterment of the health of the peoples of the world. I have been associated with Dr. Billings for quite forty years in hearty co-operation and lifelong friendship and sympathy.

I enclose a memoir which records my experience of the fruits of his work from actual knowledge. Anything that I can do in any way to help the Trustees to make the commemoration of the life and work of John Shaw Billings take a form which will prove a permanent living force for those who come after will be gratefully and thoroughly done to the utmost of my powers.

Kindly express my deep and heartfelt regret that it should be impossible for me to be present and take part in the proceedings on the 25th instant.

FROM DR. E. C. RICHARDSON, LIBRARIAN OF PRINCETON UNIVERSITY

The few librarians that we have known who have actually made a distinctive mark in modern library history have differed very widely in the character of their contributions. Dr. Billings belongs among those who have sketched out big propositions in a broad way rather than to those whose chief interest is the perfecting of the details of organization or service to users, but in many particulars, and I fancy in every line where time permitted, his attention to the utmost last minute detail was quite as extraordinary as the breadth of his sketching, and indeed the catalogue is a monument to both these aspects, in which his capacity and performance must be described as genius.

FROM MISS HELEN E. HAINES, FORMERLY ASSISTANT EDITOR OF "THE LIBRARY JOURNAL"

It was kind of you to include me among those invited to the Commemorative service for Dr. Billings, and I am sure you know how deeply I regret my inability to share in this expression of affection and admiration. Ever since 1897, when I first came to know him, Dr. Billings was one of my best and most helpful friends, and I went to him again and again (and never in vain) for counsel in some perplexity about library affairs — ever with a deepening sense of his wisdom, the wonderful range and precision of his mind, and the essential sweetness and kindliness that were woven into the fabric of his nature. During the last five years especially, his warm, encouraging sympathy was a constant help through many dark hours, and I came to feel a deep affection for him that will always be a happy memory.

In the library world his work seems to me to stand alone, quite unparalleled, greater and more far-reaching during the last fifteen years of his life alone than Panizzi's during his whole career. Those of us who remember vividly what the public library situation was in New York when the problem was placed in his hands — the diverse tangled threads of the many little libraries, unrelated, inadequate and ill-supported; and the resistant warp of the two great reference foundations, indurated by years of isolation from vital public contact — know well that it was the achievement of the impossible that crowns his lifework, in the wonderful Public Library system of to-day. Somehow his results seemed to be obtained almost imperceptibly; nothing was ever heralded, no whirlwinds of preparation ever shook the air, but little by little every part seemed to slip into its place in the whole.

Year after year behind the green baize doors in the dingy old Astor one found him at any hour of the day, almost always a listener, silent or laconic, with now and then a gleam of blue lightning from under his drooped eyelids or a slowly uttered dryly whimsical sentence. In the last letter I had from him, written not long before his death, he said: — "Do you remember a little poem by Moira O'Neill, called 'The Ould Lad'?" —

> "Ye see me now an ould man, his work near done,
> Sure the hair upon me head's gone white;
> But the things meself consated 'or the time that I could run,
> They're the nearest to me heart this night."

We all know how great the things were that he "consated" and that his work of service to the world will never end.

FROM CRESSY L. WILBUR, CHIEF STATISTICIAN, BUREAU OF THE CENSUS

Vital statistics was a subject very near to Doctor Billings's heart. In my work of promoting adequate registration of vital statistics for this country I have deeply realized the fundamental service that Doctor Billings rendered to the cause while in charge of the mortality statistics of the Tenth and Eleventh Censuses. Although he had long withdrawn his personal attention from this work, all of us still in the field had a feeling of his kindly and interested supervision, and I most sincerely regret that circumstances prevent my attendance as a representative of the special work of the Census to which he gave so much attention, and in which his labors constitute a lasting memorial.

MINUTE ADOPTED BY THE AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION AT ITS ANNUAL CONFERENCE AT KAATERSKILL, NEW YORK, JUNE 25, 1913

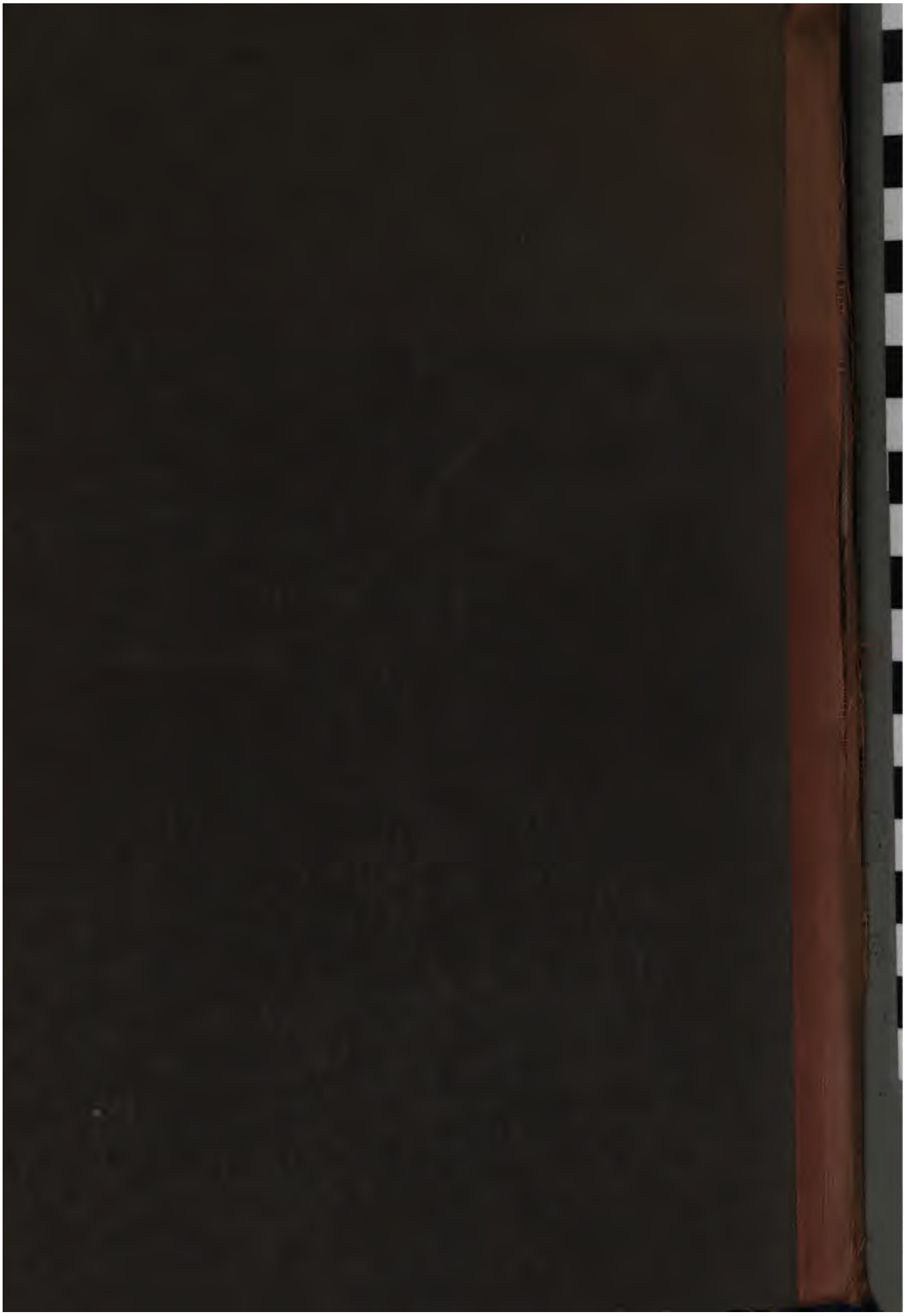
JOHN SHAW BILLINGS
April 12, 1838 – March 11, 1913
A member of the American Library Association 1881-1913
Its President, 1901-02.

It is seldom that the death of an individual removes from two professions a unit of singular power in each. But such was the loss in the recent death of John Shaw Billings: a scientist in a department of science intensive and exacting, a librarian rigorously scientific in a profession broadly humane. To the former he made original contributions which constituted him an authority within special fields; but also, in his great Index-Catalogue of Medical Literature, one which assured certainty and promoted advance in *every* field, — and left the entire medical profession his debtor. As a librarian, having first brought to preëminence the professional library entrusted to him, he was called to the organization into a single system of isolated funds and institutions; achieved that organization; and lived to see it, under his charge, develop into the largest general library system in the world, with a possible influence upon our greatest metropolis of incalculable importance to it, and, through it, to the welfare of our entire country.

The qualities which enabled him to accomplish all this included not merely certain native abilities — among them, penetration, concentration, vigor, tenacity of purpose and directness of method, — but others developed by self-denial, self-discipline, and a complete dedication to the work in hand. It was through these that he earned his education and his scientific training; and they hardened into habits which attended him to the end of his days, when he concluded in toil that shirked no detail a life begun in toil and devoted to detail.

Such habits, a keen faculty of analysis, and a scientific training kept him aloof alike from hasty generalizations and from the impulses of mere emotion; while his military training induced in him three characteristics which marked alike his treatment of measures and his dealings with men: incisiveness, a distaste for the superfluous and the redundant, and an insistence upon the suitable subordination of the part to the whole. In this

combination, and in the knowledge of, and power over, men which accompanied it, he was unique among librarians; in his complete lack of ostentation he was unusual among men. His mind was ever on the substance, indifferent to the form. A *power* in two professions, to have termed him the "ornament" of either would have affronted him; for he was consistently impatient of the merely ornamental. Any *personal* ostentation was actually repugnant to him; and he avoided it as completely in what he suffered as in what he achieved: bearing, with a reticence that asked no allowances, physical anguish in which most men would have found ample excuse from every care.

If such a combination of traits assured his remarkable efficiency, it might not have seemed calculated to promote warm personal or social attachments. Yet there was in him also a singular capacity for friendship: — not indeed for impulsive and indiscriminate intimacies, but for those selective, deep, steady, and lasting friendships which are proof of the fundamental natures of men. And however terse, austere, and even abrupt, his manner in casual relations, where a really human interest was at stake he might be relied upon for sympathies both warm and considerate, and the more effective because consistently just and inevitably sincere.

The testimonies to these qualities in his character, to these powers, and to his varied achievements, have already been many and impressive. The American Library Association wishes to add its own, with a special recognition not merely of the value to the community of the things which he accomplished, but of the value to the individuals in the example of a character and abilities so resolutely developed and so resolutely applied to the service of science and the service of men.